

Buffalo

2026 FIRST QUARTER REPORT

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

VISIT
Buffalo

BUFFALO
CONVENTION
CENTER

Buffalo¹
SPORTS
COMMISSION

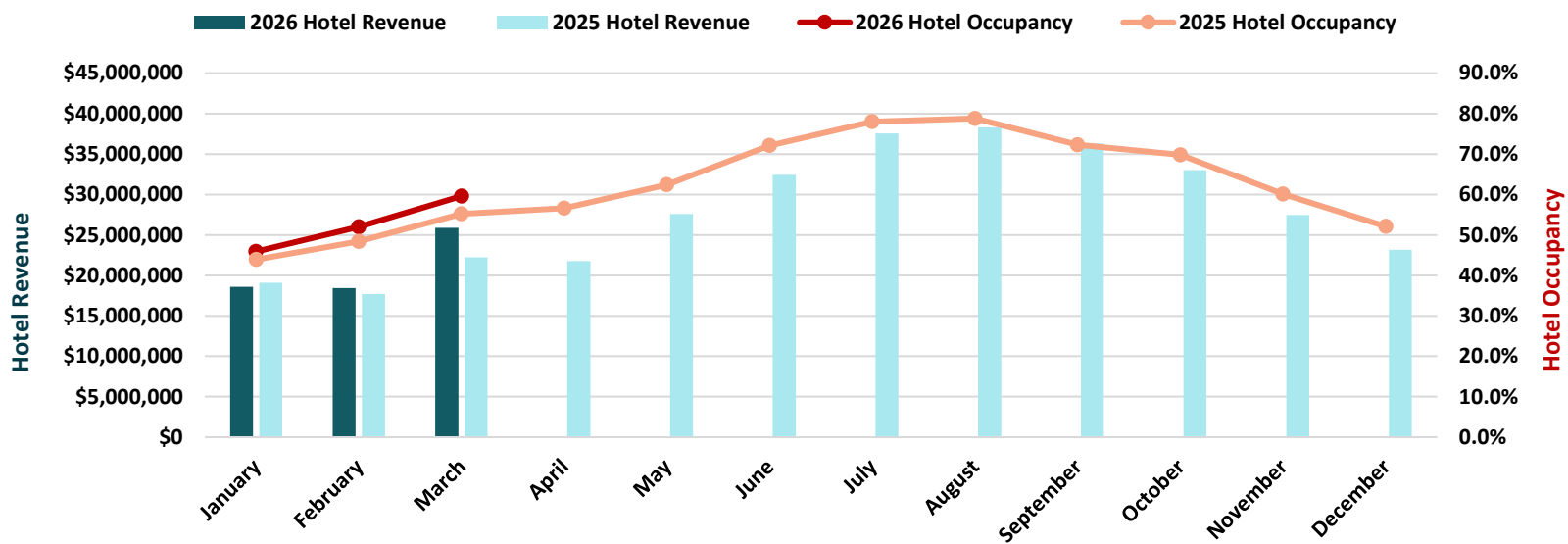
VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

2026 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DASHBOARDS

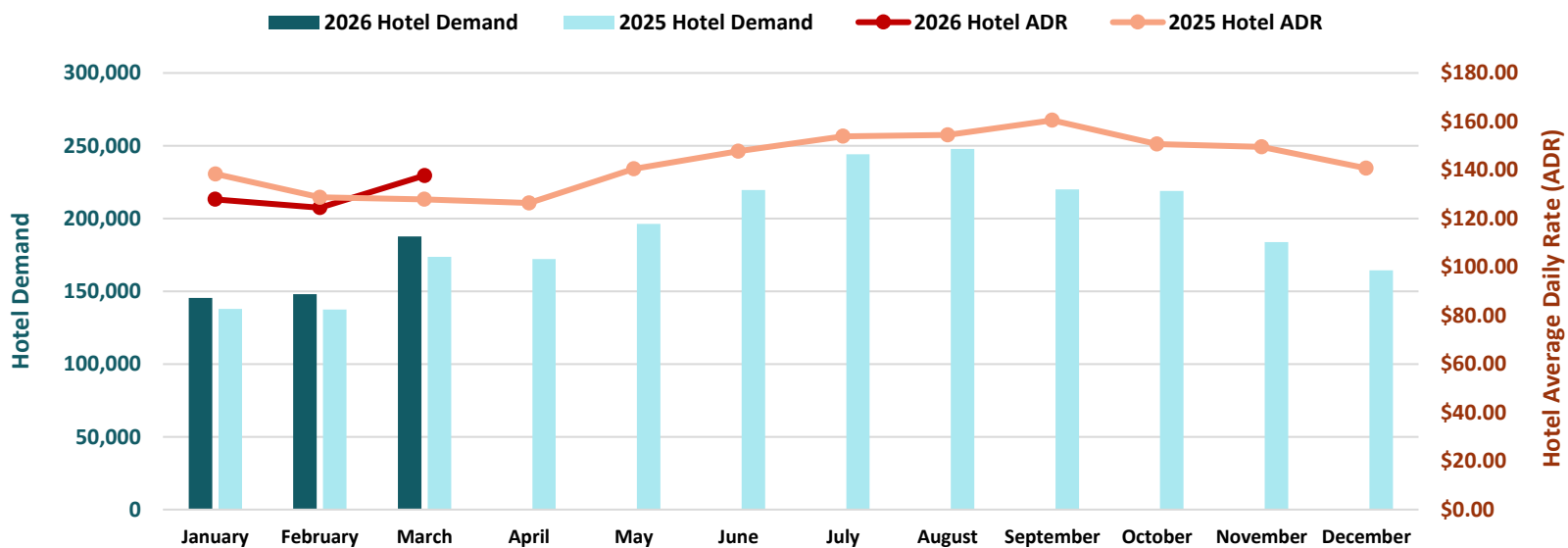
ERIE COUNTY HOTEL/MOTEL DATA

KPI	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	YTD 2026	YOY % CHANGE
OCCUPANCY	45.9%	52.0%	59.6%	52.5%	6.7%
ADR	\$127.88	\$124.45	\$137.73	\$130.69	0.5%
REVPAR	\$58.73	\$64.69	\$82.04	\$68.59	6.1%
DEMAND	145,347	147,999	187,756	480,957	7.1%
REVENUE	\$18,586,259	\$18,418,211	\$25,859,773	\$62,857,026	6.5%

ERIE COUNTY HOTEL/MOTEL REVENUE AND OCCUPANCY



ERIE COUNTY HOTEL/MOTEL DEMAND AND AVERAGE DAILY RATE



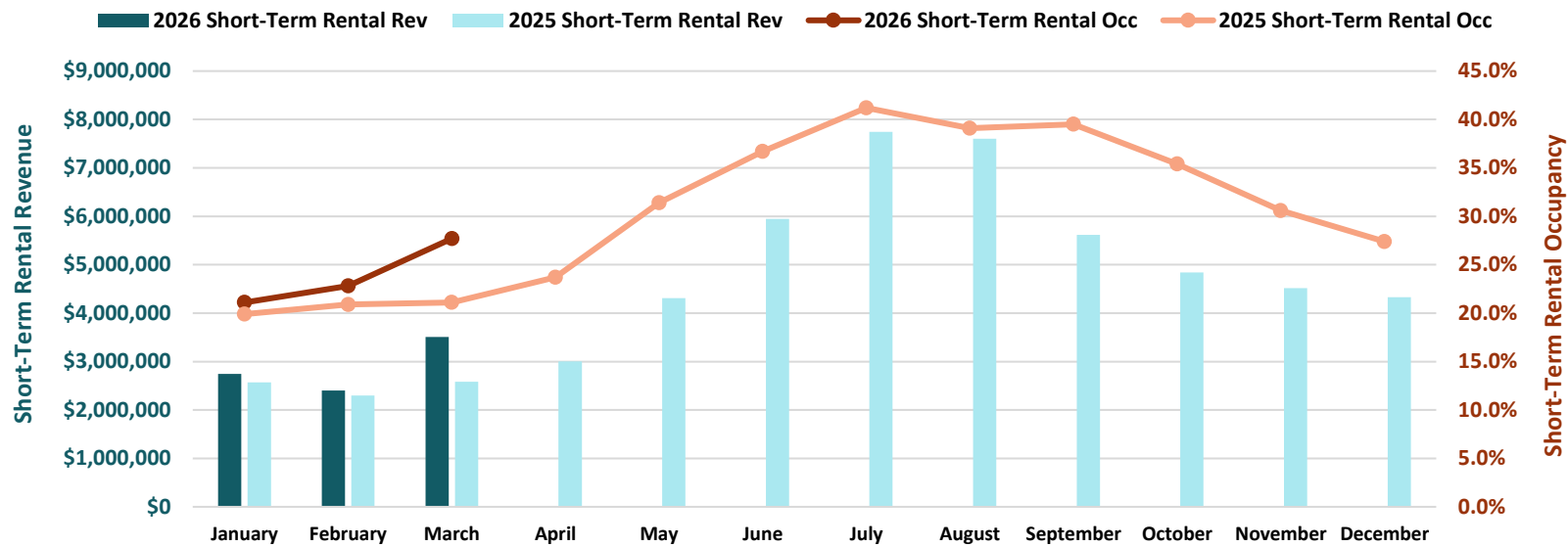
VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

2026 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DASHBOARDS

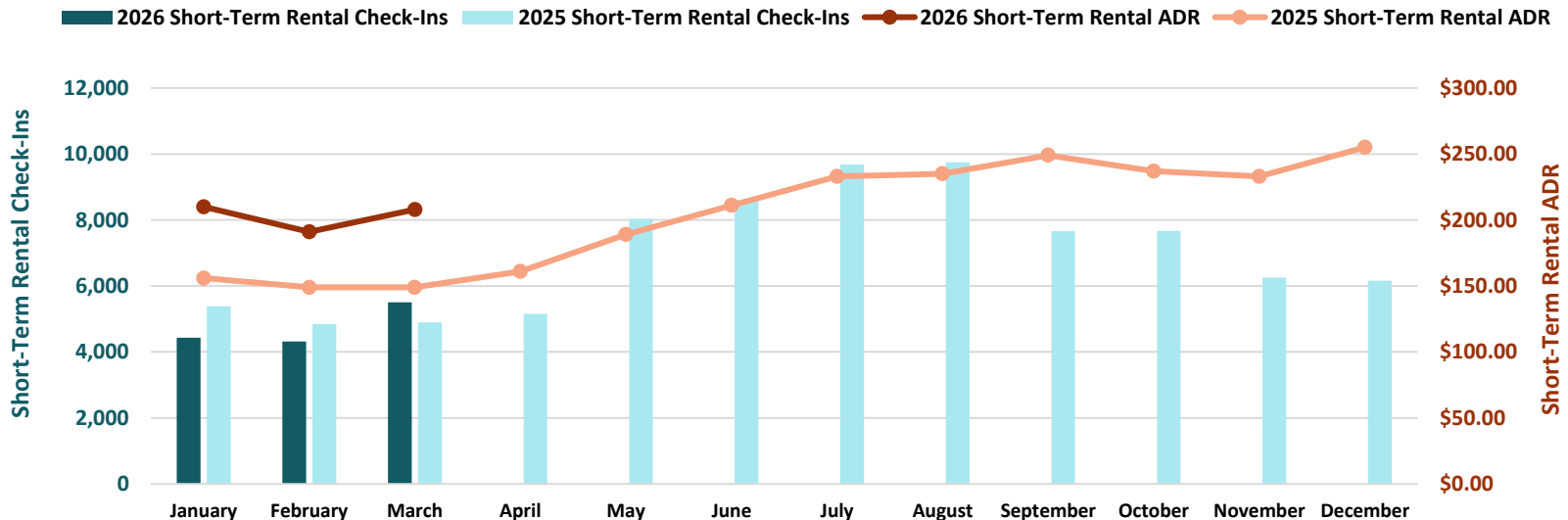
ERIE COUNTY SHORT-TERM RENTAL DATA

KPI	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	YTD 2026*	YOY % CHANGE
OCCUPANCY	21.1%	22.8%	27.7%	23.9%	16.6%
ADR	\$210.00	\$191.00	\$208.00	\$203.00	25.6%
REVPAR	\$44.00	\$44.00	\$57.00	\$48.00	54.8%
GUEST CHECK-INS	4,433	4,318	5,507	14,255	-5.8%
REVENUE	\$2,747,938	\$2,399,707	\$3,511,181	\$8,650,834	16.6%

ERIE COUNTY SHORT-TERM RENTAL REVENUE AND OCCUPANCY



ERIE COUNTY SHORT-TERM RENTAL GUEST CHECK-INS AND AVERAGE DAILY RATE



VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

2026 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DASHBOARDS

BUFFALO NIAGARA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PASSENGER TRAFFIC

KPI	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	YTD 2026	YOY % CHANGE
AIRPORT PASSENGER TRAFFIC	297,320	319,093	389,677	1,006,090	-4.4%

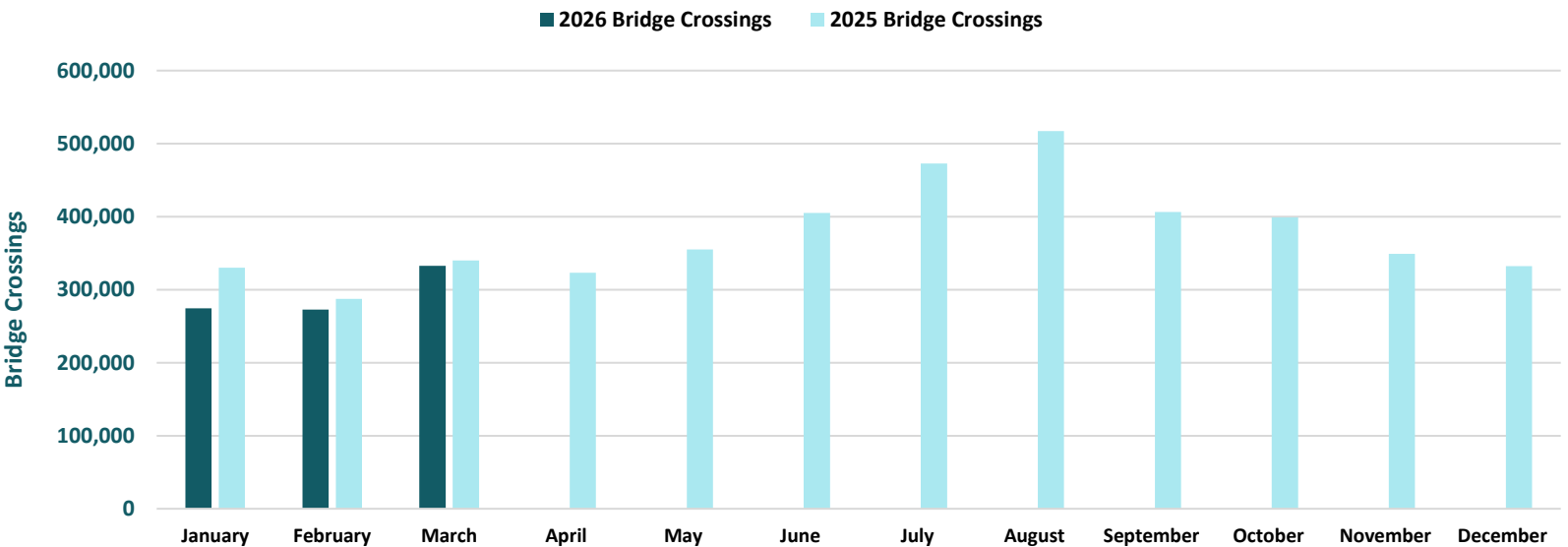
AIRPORT PASSENGER TRAFFIC



U.S. / CANADA BRIDGE (PEACE, LEWISTON-QUEENSTON, RAINBOW, WHIRLPOOL) CROSSINGS

KPI	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	YTD 2026	YTD % CHANGE
BRIDGE CROSSINGS	274,568	272,862	332,627	547,430	-8.1%

ERIE COUNTY SHORT-TERM RENTAL GUEST CHECK-INS AND AVERAGE DAILY RATE



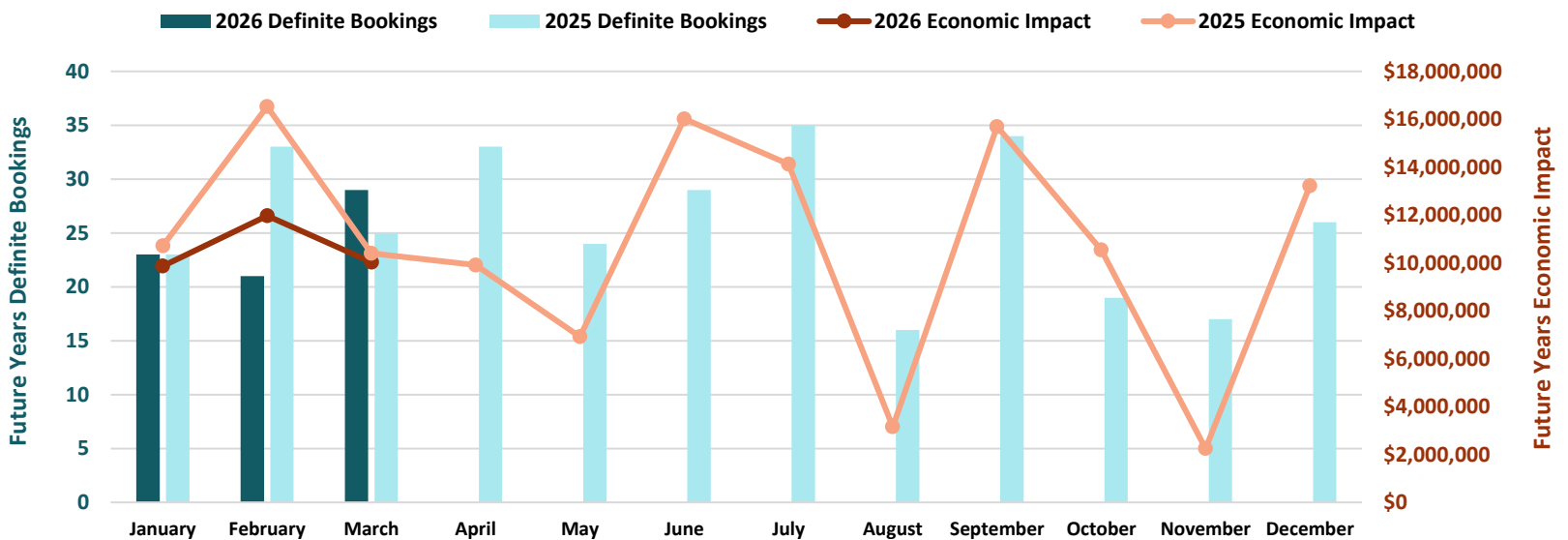
VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

2026 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DASHBOARDS

SALES & SERVICES – MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS, SPORTS, AND TOUR & TRAVEL

KPI	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	YTD 2026	YOY % CHANGE
LEADS GENERATED	62	40	39	141	-6.2%
LEAD ROOM NIGHTS	33,677	28,049	24,036	85,762	-31.9%
LEAD ATTENDANCE	32,470	18,165	17,682	68,317	-55.6%
LEAD ECONOMIC IMPACT	\$26,624,728	\$22,400,103	\$19,881,716	\$68,906,546	-47.6%
DEFINITE BOOKINGS	23	21	29	73	-9.9%
DEFINITE ROOM NIGHTS	12,132	14,258	11,404	37,794	-23.6%
DEFINITE ATTENDANCE	11,879	14,485	13,763	40,127	-22.3%
DEFINITE ECONOMIC IMPACT	\$9,868,983	\$11,969,498	\$10,026,811	\$31,865,292	-15.4%
EVENTS HELD	11	12	19	42	-30.0%
EVENTS HELD ROOM NIGHTS	9,103	15,1674	25,467	50,244	8.7%
EVENTS HELD ATTENDANCE	10,619	13,915	22,528	47,062	-30.8%
GROUPS SERVICED	7	10	18	35	2.9%
LOST LEADS	22	39	21	82	39.0%
LOST LEADS ECONOMIC IMPACT	\$18,555,272	\$35,499,611	\$22,473,102	\$76,527,986	81.7%
LOST LEADS HOTEL INVENTORY	2	2	3	7	75.0%
LOST LEADS HOTEL INVENTORY EI	\$1,423,746	\$529,708	\$4,249,992	\$6,203,446	-19.5%
STAFF TRADESHOW ATTENDANCE	4	2	3	9	-18.2%
SITE VISITS AND FAMS HELD	2	3	7	12	-7.7%

ALL SALES FUTURE YEARS DEFINITE BOOKINGS AND ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT



VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

2026 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DASHBOARDS

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

KPI	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	YTD 2026	YOY % CHANGE
ORGANIC GOOGLE IMPRESSIONS	5,018,320	4,769,782	4,851,661	14,639,763	-48.4%
ENGAGED SESSIONS	51,037	57,728	70,755	179,520	-9.8%
MOBILE SESSIONS	33,337	37,022	44,914	115,273	-13.5%
WEBSITE VIEWS	166,535	184,430	224,815	575,780	-9.3%
VIDEO VIEWS	420,959	603,009	377,597	1,401,565	131.1%
MEDIA PLACEMENTS	15	9	15	39	-27.8%
MEDIA IMPRESSIONS	174,544,215	16,623,979	64,323,116	255,491,310	4.0%
MEDIA SOCIAL SHARES	2,900	510	118	3,528	-62.6%
MEDIA TOUCHPOINTS	13	12	14	39	-35.0%
MEDIA VISITS	0	0	0	0	-100.0%
SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS	159	157	158	474	-6.5%
FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS	131,447	132,002	132,567	132,567	11.9%
INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS	99,226	99,395	99,889	99,889	4.6%
TIKTOK FOLLOWERS	44,137	44,290	44,356	44,356	25.4%

WEBSITE ANALYTICS, MEASUREMENT CHALLENGES, AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR 2026 AND BEYOND

Tracking website analytics for a destination marketing organization is complex, and year-over-year comparisons can be misleading without context. Changes in search behavior, updates to Google Analytics 4, and frequent algorithm shifts from Google all impact how traffic is discovered and reported. These updates can create volatility in rankings and traffic that does not necessarily reflect true destination demand. Changes in reporting methods, including how impressions are counted and how AI-driven results are displayed, can further distort performance trends.

This challenge was amplified when Visit Buffalo launched a new website URL in the third quarter of 2025 as part of its rebrand. A domain migration requires search engines to reindex the site, often causing short-term fluctuations in rankings, traffic, and keyword visibility. Even with proper redirects, performance can dip while authority rebuilds. The transition also disrupts analytics continuity, fragmenting traffic attribution and making direct year-over-year comparisons, especially for organic and direct traffic, less reliable.

In response, Visit Buffalo will take a more holistic approach to evaluation in 2026 and beyond. This includes focusing on longer-term trends rather than short-term shifts, prioritizing engagement metrics like time on site and itinerary interactions, and emphasizing conversions such as guide downloads, partner referrals, and lead generation. Performance will also be validated across channels using data from STR, Zartico, and Tourism Economics, with 2026 serving as a new baseline following the URL transition.

Success will be measured not by a single metric, but by how effectively Visit Buffalo's digital efforts drive engagement, support trip planning, and contribute to overall visitation and economic impact.

VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

2026 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DASHBOARDS

DESTINATION EXPERIENCE

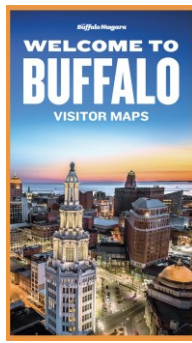
KPI	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	YTD 2026	YOY % CHANGE*
Visitor Center Hours of Operation	152	152	170	474	-
Visitor Center Engagements	181	267	177	625	-
Mobile Visitor Center Events	0	0	1	1	-
Visitor Information Inquiries	65	80	120	265	-
Bulk Visitor Guide Distribution	0	3,400	2,000	5,400	-
CTA Training Sessions	1	3	2	6	-
CTA Training Participants	26	47	40	113	-
CTA/Volunteer Event Opportunities	0	0	12	12	-
CTA/Volunteers Engaged	0	0	72	72	-
CTA/Volunteer Hours	0	0	296	296	-

*New Department KPI Dashboard For 2026

VISIT BUFFALO GUIDES AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION



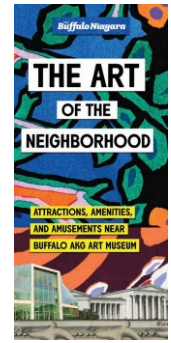
Annual Visitor Guide



Buffalo Visitor Maps



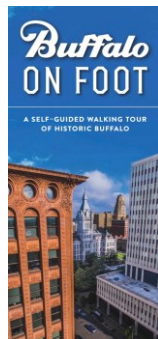
African American Heritage Guide



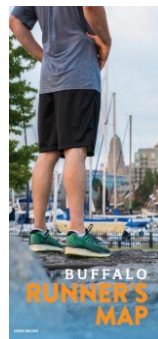
The Art of the Neighborhood



Beer In Buffalo



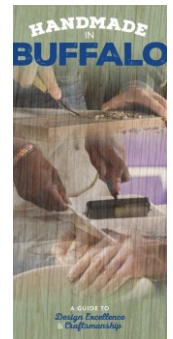
Buffalo On Foot



Buffalo Runner's Map



Buffalo Wing Trail



Handmade In Buffalo

2026 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DASHBOARDS

SALES & SERVICES – MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS, SPORTS, AND TOUR & TRAVEL

KPI	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	YTD 2026	YOY % CHANGE
TOTAL REVENUE	\$309,491	\$165,199	\$348,698	\$823,388	-27.3%
RENT REVENUE	\$96,985	\$71,741	\$205,846	\$374,572	0.4%
FOOD & BEVERAGE REVENUE	\$147,689	\$63,564	\$27,127	\$238,380	-56.3%
CONCESSION REVENUE	\$32,729	\$1,314	\$82,774	\$116,817	-13.1%
ELECTRICAL REVENUE	\$24,403	\$20,131	\$30,501	\$75,035	2.6%
OTHER REVENUE	\$7,685	\$8,449	\$2,450	\$18,584	1057.6%
TOTAL EVENTS HELD	6	6	6	18	-28.0%
CONVENTIONS	0	2	2	4	-20.0%
MEETINGS	2	2	2	6	-14.3%
BANQUETS	2	0	0	2	-75.0%
CONSUMER/PUBLIC SHOWS	2	2	2	6	33.3%
EVENT ATTENDANCE	16,356	6,548	28,131	51,035	-25.7%
NUMBER OF DAYS OCCUPIED	20	21	28	69	-5.5%
TOTAL LEADS	18	20	9	47	-9.6%
BCC GENERATED LEADS	11	9	4	24	-14.3%
VISIT BUFFALO GENERATED LEADS	7	11	5	23	-4.2%
CONFIRMED BOOKINGS	4	12	16	32	-23.8%
TOTAL SOLICITATION CALLS	49	69	61	179	-9.1%
EXISTING SOLICITATION CALLS	20	33	32	85	25.0%
NEW SOLICITATION CALLS	29	36	29	94	-27.1%
LOST BUSINESS	6	5	12	23	4.2%

BCC CURRENT AND FUTURE BOOKED BUSINESS

	2025*	2026**	2027**	2028**	2029**
NUMBER OF EVENTS	103	84	66	36	19
EXPECTED ATTENDANCE	165,237	147,900	182,555	145,775	67,700
EXPECTED HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS	19,640	30,328	31,296	13,970	11,500
EXPECTED ECONOMIC IMPACT	\$25,552,120	\$19,265,048	\$21,223,110	\$16,240,929	\$8,968,258

* Final for year
** Updated Quarterly

VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

ORGANIZATION & ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

THE BUFFALO NEWS – ANOTHER VOICE: INVESTMENT IN TOURISM MARKETING MUST BE A LONG GAME

The story of Buffalo is everywhere these days, and that's no accident. After decades of transformation, our destination finally has the tourism megaphone it has long deserved, thanks to additional bed tax funding from Erie County. Buffalo's advertising now appears on billboards in cities like Chicago and Boston, and digitally in key markets across the country, as part of our new "That's Buffalo For You" advertising campaign and rebrand. This new messaging is just the beginning of our multi-year effort to increase visitation to Buffalo and Erie County like we never have before.

Over the last year, hundreds of national media outlets, including Bloomberg, Forbes, and Lonely Planet, buzzed about our destination, thanks in large part to Visit Buffalo's communications team, which spread the word about Buffalo. Top tier publications like Conde Nast Traveler and AFAR designated us a top destination to travel to in 2026, while Travel + Leisure even named us "The Most Festive Place to Celebrate Christmas in the U.S." It took years of relationship building with national travel journalists to achieve these accolades, and we must sustain our investment in tourism marketing to keep that buzz building for years to come.

For the first time in our organization's history, we've even begun a dedicated winter advertising campaign, touting our county and region as a destination that's "Made for Snowbuffs." Buffalo is no longer an insider's secret, but a destination confidently stepping onto the global stage with energy, pride, and momentum. Converting this marketing investment into increased visitation here will take time, and we can't take our foot off the gas now.

Over the last year, our team also reinvested in our community, creating a new countywide neighborhood mural program, publishing a refreshed African American Heritage Guide to Buffalo, and debuting a new food trail celebrating our culinary classics. We also introduced the region's first Certified Tourism Ambassador initiative and opened the new Buffalo Visitor Center at Canalside, setting the stage to welcome more visitors here than ever before.

Meetings, conventions, and sports events also soared in 2025. The year ahead will build on that momentum, with our meetings and Buffalo Sports Commission staff helping make signature events like the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament and NHL Draft a success in Buffalo, generating millions of dollars in local economic impact. Our team is hard at work securing future conventions and sports tournaments in Buffalo, ensuring that revenue continues flowing into our community for years to come.

It's been nothing short of an outstanding year, and it's only the beginning. Our collective investment in tourism marketing must be a long-game effort. We've already accomplished so much, yet a world of potential still remains to raise awareness about Buffalo and Erie County and increase visitation in the years ahead. Let's keep the momentum going into the next chapter in 2026.

- Patrick Kaler, President & CEO – Visit Buffalo

IN MEMORIAM, JONATHAN A. DANDES



It was with heavy hearts that Visit Buffalo mourned the passing of Jonathan A. Dandes, a deeply respected leader and longtime member of the Visit Buffalo Board of Directors.

Jon served multiple terms on the board and served as Chair three times, reflecting the trust, respect, and confidence he earned from his peers. He was a dedicated advocate for Buffalo and Erie County, leaving a lasting impact on arts and culture, sports, health care, and tourism. His leadership, insight, and dedication helped shape Visit Buffalo's direction and strengthened the broader hospitality and tourism community.

Jon's passion for this region and his willingness to lead during pivotal moments created a meaningful and lasting legacy. His impact will continue to be felt through the organization and throughout Erie County for years to come.

The Visit Buffalo Board of Directors and staff extend their heartfelt condolences to Jon's family, friends, and colleagues. He will be remembered with gratitude, respect, and deep appreciation for all he contributed to our community.

VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

ORGANIZATION & ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

HVS MARKET STUDY RECAP – PROPOSED DOWNTOWN CONVENTION HOTEL

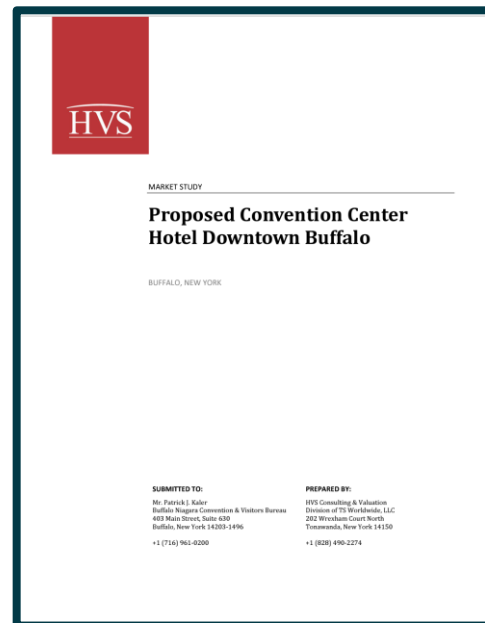
Visit Buffalo commissioned HVS, a nationally recognized hospitality consulting firm, to evaluate the market feasibility of a new full-service convention center hotel in downtown Buffalo. The independent study concludes that a minimum 400-room, upper-upscale, full-service hotel located adjacent to the Buffalo Convention Center is market-supported and strategically necessary for Buffalo to remain competitive in the meetings and conventions industry.

HVS identified a long-standing structural gap in Buffalo’s hospitality inventory. While downtown offers quality hotel options, the city lacks a headquarters-style property with sufficient room block, full-service amenities, and walkable proximity to the convention center to consistently attract larger conventions and citywide events. As a result, Buffalo is often unable to fully compete for or accommodate higher-impact meetings.

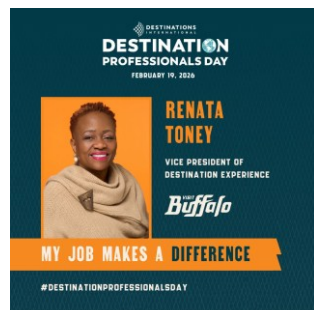
The study projects that the proposed hotel would ramp up and stabilize at approximately 66 percent occupancy, consistent with healthy market performance. Importantly, HVS determined that even with the addition of 400 rooms, the broader downtown hotel market would remain stable, with average occupancy continuing in the mid-60 percent range. Demand for the hotel is driven primarily by meetings and group business, rather than speculative leisure growth.

HVS further concludes that the hotel would capture currently unmet demand rather than shift business away from existing downtown properties. By enabling Buffalo to host larger conventions, the project would generate broader economic benefits across hotels, restaurants, attractions, and small businesses downtown.

Overall, the study provides professional, third-party validation that a convention-adjacent, 400-room full-service hotel is both operationally and financially feasible and represents a foundational investment in Buffalo’s long-term competitiveness as a meetings and events destination.



CELEBRATING THE DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION INDUSTRY



In recognition of Destinations International Destination Professionals Day, Visit Buffalo joined industry partners worldwide in celebrating the critical role that destination organizations play in strengthening their communities.

Every destination has a distinct story, and destination professionals are responsible for bringing that story to life by elevating its people, culture, heritage, and defining sense of place. Visit Buffalo used the occasion to reinforce how its work showcases Buffalo and Erie County while delivering measurable economic and community impact through travel and tourism.

To mark the day, Visit Buffalo staff shared individual announcements on LinkedIn and other social media platforms, joining fellow destination marketing organizations worldwide in recognizing the professionals whose efforts drive visitation, support local businesses, enhance community pride, and shape how visitors experience the places they call home.

VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

ORGANIZATION & ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

RELEASE OF 2025 VISIT BUFFALO ANNUAL REPORT



In February, Visit Buffalo released its first official Annual Report since the pandemic, signaling renewed momentum and a strengthened tourism economy.

With enhanced bed tax funding from Erie County, a new national campaign was launched in partnership with MMGY Global, generating more than 32 million video views and over 300 earned media placements. Coverage from outlets including Bloomberg, Forbes, Lonely Planet, and Travel + Leisure strengthened Buffalo's national profile.

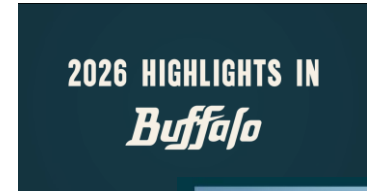
Sales efforts delivered 269 meetings, conventions, tours, and sporting events, producing \$129 million in economic impact and more than 155,000 hotel room nights. International outreach through Brand USA and IPW expanded global visibility.

The Buffalo Sports Commission secured and hosted high-impact events, including the USA Hockey International Paralympic Committee Sled World Championship, further elevating Buffalo's reputation as a premier sports destination.

Additional milestones included opening a new Visitor Center at Canalside, launching the Certified Tourism Ambassador program, debuting the Ultimate Buffalo Food Trail, and introducing a countywide mural initiative.

The 2025 report reflects measurable progress, strategic investment, and a destination confidently competing on a larger stage.

VISIT BUFFALO WHATS HAPPENING IN 2026



Visit Buffalo produced an in-house social media video highlighting the energy and momentum across Buffalo and Erie County in 2026, showcasing a dynamic mix of new, reimagined, and reopened experiences, as well as major conventions and sporting events. The video integrates the new "That's Buffalo For You" brand, reinforcing a bold and authentic narrative about the destination's evolution and appeal.

Featured prominently are iconic cultural assets such as Frank Lloyd Wright's Graycliff and the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, as well as world-class venues like KeyBank Center. The video also highlights a strong lineup of events and organizations choosing Buffalo, including the American Jump Rope Federation, the National Hockey League Draft, the Williams Syndrome Association, the Buffalo Bills, the Hispanic Heritage Council of WNY Inc., the National Indian Education Association, and the historic Colored Musicians Club of Buffalo.

This video serves as both a promotional and storytelling tool, positioning Buffalo as a vibrant, year-round destination while demonstrating Visit Buffalo's ability to produce high-quality, strategic content in-house.


VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

SALES & SERVICES DEPARTMENT

TRADESHOWS ATTENDED – JANUARY 2026



Annual Convention & Tradeshow
Reno, NV
January 10-13
Meaghan Zimmer



Annual Convention
Philadelphia, PA
January 11-14
Temekia Powers



Annual Conference
Fort Myers, FL
January 12-16
Greg Gelinas



Annual Summit Conference
Las Vegas, NV
January 14-16
James Adler

TRADESHOWS ATTENDED – FEBRUARY 2026



Annual Conference & Tradeshow
Niagara Falls, NY
February 8-11
Leah Mueller, Meredith Walsh

Visit Buffalo participated in the annual Summit hosted by the International Inbound Travel Association, a leading sales and education forum for inbound operators, DMOs, and suppliers.

The three-and-a-half-day program focused on targeted networking, business appointments, and industry updates, including advocacy on visa processing, national park access, Brand USA, and small-business priorities.

Visit Buffalo also sponsored the conference’s Super Bowl-themed opening night event, strengthening our visibility and relationships within the international travel trade.



Annual Convention & Tradeshow
Lexington, KY
February 10-12
Marisa Urbano

TRADESHOWS ATTENDED – MARCH 2026



Annual Convention & Tradeshow
Fort Worth, TX
March 2-4
Greg Gelinas



Triple M Conference
Albany, NY
March 19
Meaghan Zimmer



Annual Conference & Tradeshow
Miramar, FL
March 24-26
Marisa Urbano

LAUREN VARGO HONORED AT THE GIRLS' AND WOMEN IN SPORTS NIGHT

The Buffalo Sports Commission and Visit Buffalo are proud to recognize Services Manager Lauren Vargo for her recent honor at the Girls and Women in Sports Night hosted by the Buffalo Sabres.

Lauren plays a vital role in the success of sporting events across Erie County, coordinating and supporting competitions that continue to position Buffalo as a premier sports destination. Her work brings together event organizers, coaches, athletes, and fans, while strengthening the region’s growing sports tourism economy.

In addition to her local impact, Lauren represents our organization on the national stage through her involvement with the Sports Events & Tourism Association Women’s Summit and the Event Service Professionals Association. Through this engagement, she helps elevate Buffalo’s visibility and reputation within the industry.

This recognition reflects Lauren’s professionalism, leadership, and commitment to excellence. It is well deserved and speaks to the caliber of talent driving our organization forward.



VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

SALES & SERVICES DEPARTMENT

BUFFALO SPORTS COMMISSION RECEIVES WELCOMING SPORTS DESTINATION AWARD



The Buffalo Sports Commission has been named the Welcoming Sports Destination Award recipient at the 2026 Compete Sports For All™ Petey Awards, held in Las Vegas.

This national recognition affirms Buffalo's longstanding commitment to collaboration, hospitality, and community-driven event hosting. Continued success is rooted in strong partnerships and a unified approach to serving event rights holders, athletes, and fans.

The award reflects the dedication of the Buffalo Sports Commission team, tourism and hospitality partners, engaged stakeholders, and supportive government leaders. Because of this collective effort, Buffalo remains a destination where sporting events of all sizes are executed professionally and where participants feel genuinely welcomed.

The event also celebrated peer destinations and industry leaders who are expanding access and strengthening communities through sport. The Buffalo Sports Commission is honored to be recognized among them and will continue building on this momentum to further position Buffalo as a premier sports destination.



SALES & SERVICES DEPARTMENT HOSTS QUARTERLY HOTEL SALES MEETING AT BUFFALO AKG

The first quarterly Sales Committee meeting was held at the Buffalo AKG Art Museum under Common Sky, with thanks to hosts Woody Brown and Megan Woloszyn.

The agenda included a review of a strong 2026 outlook across meetings and conventions, sports, and tour and travel, with solid room night opportunities projected for Erie County hotels. We also outlined fair-share buy-in opportunities for partners to join Visit Buffalo at nearly 50 trade shows in 2026, expanding our reach in key markets.

The committee discussed the ongoing challenge created by the loss of nearly 500 hotel rooms and the importance of presenting competitive rates and value-driven offers. Hotels were encouraged to keep Visit Buffalo informed of renovations and capital improvements so our team can accurately position and promote the destination.

The meeting reinforced the importance of alignment, communication, and readiness as we advance sales efforts for the year ahead.



USCAA – SMALL COLLEGE BASKETBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Visit Buffalo and the Buffalo Sports Commission welcomed the United States Collegiate Athletic Association Small College Basketball National Championships back to Erie County for year two of this successful partnership.

The championship continues to deliver strong competition and solid economic impact, bringing teams, administrators, and many first-time visitors to the region. In addition to the on-court action, participants and fans are experiencing Erie County's food scene, neighborhoods, and nearby attractions, including Niagara Falls, reinforcing the value of sports tourism for overnight stays and visitor spending.

The USCAA has committed to returning to Buffalo through 2028, providing multi-year stability and the opportunity to build momentum year over year. We are also exploring additional national championship opportunities with the association across other USCAA sports.

We appreciate the continued partnership with USCAA leadership, including BJ Bertges, a member of our Customer Advisory Council, along with Jenna Petrucci and Jared Sullenberger, whose collaboration continues to strengthen Buffalo's position as a trusted host destination for collegiate athletics.



VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

SALES & SERVICES DEPARTMENT

FAMILY REUNION SEMINAR



On Saturday, February 28, Visit Buffalo hosted a Family Reunion Seminar at the headquarters of the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission in Buffalo.

The seminar highlighted the importance of family reunions as both cultural touchpoints and economic drivers, particularly within the African American travel market. Research shared during the session noted that more than 80 percent of African Americans attend annual or biannual family reunions, with a significant portion of leisure travel connected to these gatherings.

Participants discussed how family reunions generate hotel stays, restaurant visits, venue rentals, and local spending, while also strengthening generational ties and preserving cultural heritage. The program aligned with Visit Buffalo's destination experience strategy by supporting community-based travel, encouraging repeat visitation, and positioning Buffalo as a welcoming and meaningful location for heritage- and family-focused travel.

Attendees received practical planning guidance, information on local venues and services, and an overview of how Visit Buffalo can support future family reunion events across Erie County.

NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT INDUSTRY PREPAREDNESS SEMINAR



As March approached, Visit Buffalo and the Buffalo Sports Commission convened more than 100 hospitality and tourism leaders from across Erie County for a press conference and preparedness seminar ahead of the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament at KeyBank Center, held March 19 and 21. The event was hosted by Resurgence Brewing Company.

The seminar focused on preparation and coordination across hotels, restaurants, breweries, retailers, attractions, and transportation partners in anticipation of approximately 19,000 visitors during tournament week. Aligning industry partners in advance was critical to delivering a strong visitor experience and maximizing economic impact.

Meetings, conventions, and amateur sporting events are projected to generate approximately \$81 million in economic impact across Erie County in 2026, with March serving as an important early indicator for the year ahead.

The session also highlighted the strategic planning underway by Visit Buffalo and the Buffalo Sports Commission, including targeted marketing efforts, a dedicated visitor landing page, volunteer engagement, and on-the-ground activations designed to welcome athletes, families, and fans. The seminar reinforced that while hosting marquee events is important, preparation is what ensures Buffalo delivers at a high level.

VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

SALES & SERVICES DEPARTMENT

SUNYAC SWIMMING & DIVING CHAMPIONSHIPS RETURN TO BUFFALO

Buffalo once again hosted the SUNYAC Swimming & Diving Championships at the Burt Flickinger Athletic Center, welcoming student-athletes, coaches, and families from across the State University of New York Athletic Conference.

The championships have returned to Buffalo multiple times over the years, reflecting the Flickinger Center’s long-standing reputation as a premier collegiate aquatic venue and Buffalo’s reliability as a host destination. The event delivered strong competition, including standout swims, dives, and conference-level performances, while generating overnight stays and visitor spending in Erie County.

This recurring championship reinforces Buffalo’s strength in hosting NCAA and conference-level amateur sporting events and its continued value as a trusted partner for SUNYAC and collegiate athletics.

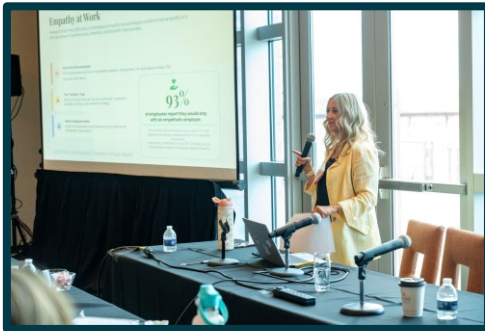


MEAGHAN ZIMMER SERVES AS A ESSAE TRIPLE M EVENT KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Senior Director of Sales Meaghan Zimmer was a keynote speaker at the ESSAE Triple M Event in Albany, New York, presenting *“Strength of a Smile: Thriving at Work Through Invisible Pain.”*

In recognition of Endometriosis Awareness Month, Meaghan delivered a powerful and personal message on leading and succeeding while managing challenges that are not always visible. Drawing from her experience across hospitality and destination marketing, along with her own journey, she highlighted the importance of empathy, resilience, and intentional workplace culture.



Her keynote challenged the notion of simply “pushing through,” instead emphasizing that empathy is a leadership competency that strengthens teams, builds trust, and supports long-term performance. She also underscored that high expectations could coexist with humanity, encouraging organizations to create environments where individuals are supported as whole people.

Meaghan’s participation reflects both her leadership and the continued recognition of Visit Buffalo as a respected voice in the industry.

VISIT BUFFALO ON THE ROAD IN Q1

As part of ongoing efforts to secure future meetings and conventions, a recent site inspection with a national scientific organization highlighted Buffalo’s commitment to delivering creative, memorable experiences.

The Visit Buffalo sales team incorporated themed elements aligned with the client’s industry, including customized branding, a specialty cocktail presentation, and a “Buffalo Convention Report Card,” with contributions from partners at the Hyatt Regency Buffalo and the Buffalo Convention Center.

This approach reflects our strategy to elevate site visits beyond the traditional, creating engaging, immersive experiences that resonate with decision-makers and reinforce Buffalo’s reputation as a destination that consistently delivers.



VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

SALES & SERVICES DEPARTMENT

NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT RETURNS TO BUFFALO FOR THE 8TH TIME

Buffalo successfully hosted the First and Second Rounds of the 2026 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship, reinforcing its reputation as a proven and reliable collegiate sports destination. This marked the eighth time since 2000 that Buffalo has hosted March Madness, highlighting the region's consistency and experience in delivering national events.

The tournament brought thousands of visitors, including fans, teams, and media, to downtown Buffalo. High-profile programs, including No. 1 overall seed Michigan and No. 3 seed Michigan State, both advanced to the Sweet 16, extending Buffalo's national exposure beyond the tournament weekend.

Event Execution and Industry Alignment

Visit Buffalo and the Buffalo Sports Commission partnered with the MAAC, Canisius University, Niagara University, Pegula Sports & Entertainment, and the City of Buffalo to deliver a coordinated and seamless event. Advance outreach and preparedness efforts across hotels, restaurants, and attractions ensured alignment and strong participation, resulting in a vibrant downtown atmosphere and positive visitor feedback.

Visitor Experience and Activation

A comprehensive Basketball Fan Guide was developed and widely distributed to help visitors explore Buffalo's neighborhoods, dining, and attractions, supporting increased visitor spending. On the off day, the "Random Acts of Kindness" initiative brought staff and volunteers into downtown to engage visitors with complimentary local items, branded materials, and personalized recommendations, creating memorable and shareable experiences. Visit Buffalo staff distributed over 400 restaurant, brewery, and attraction gift cards as well as free Lyft rides.

Volunteer Engagement

A strong volunteer network, supported by local partners, assisted with wayfinding, welcome zones, and fan engagement throughout the weekend. Their presence played a key role in delivering a welcoming and well-organized experience.

Media Exposure

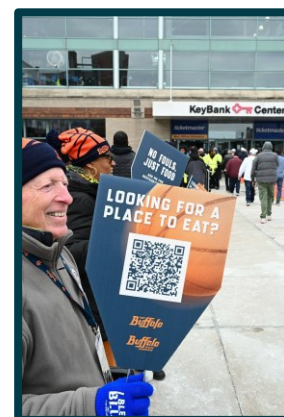
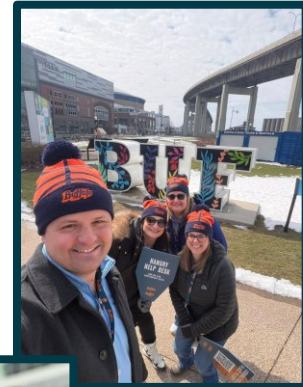
The tournament generated strong local, regional, and national media coverage. National broadcasts on CBS, TBS, TNT, and truTV, along with coverage from ESPN and digital platforms, showcased Buffalo to a broad audience and delivered meaningful earned media value.

Strategic Impact

Buffalo's successful execution reinforces its position as a competitive sports tourism destination and supports ongoing efforts to attract future events. The event also demonstrated the impact of coordinated destination marketing and industry collaboration on visitor experience and economic activity.

Next Steps

Visit Buffalo and the Buffalo Sports Commission will conduct a post-event debrief with partners and seek feedback from the NCAA. The Buffalo Sports Commission will also work with the local organizing committee to submit a bid in September to host future NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament First and Second Rounds in 2029, 2030, or 2031.



VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

DESTINATION EXPERIENCE DEPARTMENT

A RAVE REVIEW FROM A NEW BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADOR



“When I mention I’m from Buffalo, the conversation usually turns to the weather, sports, or the food. Those are part of our story - but far from the whole picture!

Buffalo’s stunning architecture, eclectic music and arts venues, vibrant neighborhoods and park system, and welcoming people are what truly define this city. At the end of 2025, I decided to be more intentional about helping tell more of our story.

I’m proud to share that, with the support of Visit Buffalo, I’ve become a Certified Tourism Ambassador. It’s all volunteer, but the goal is to be more intentional with increasing my commitment to the city that has given me every opportunity to thrive.

The same lessons we carry forward in our personal and professional lives - be empathetic, exceed customer expectations, learn constantly and stay curious, improve your skills, take pride in what you do - are so vital to ensuring the communities we live in get that same respect and attention. Maybe now more than ever.

Next time Buffalo comes up, let me tell you something you might not know about the City of Good Neighbors!”

- Andy Kucserik, Head of Global Partnerships at The Times of India

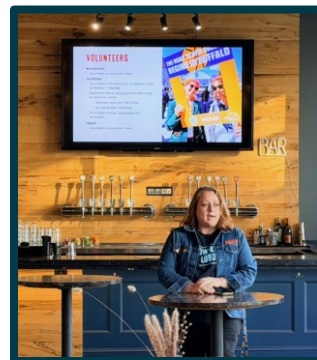
TRAINING VOLUNTEERS TO WELCOME TEAMS AND FANS FOR NCAA MEN’S BASKETBALL

Buffalo was more than prepared to welcome thousands of fans, families, and alumni as the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament returns March 19 and 21.

Visit Buffalo and the Buffalo Sports Commission led a comprehensive volunteer recruitment and training initiative to help ensure a seamless and welcoming visitor experience. Volunteers staffed hotel information tables, greeting guests and providing guidance on dining, transportation, and local attractions. A Game Day Street Team also assisted fans around the arena and throughout downtown, particularly during session breaks.

The first in-person training session was hosted by Big Ditch Brewing Company. A second training session was scheduled to be held virtually via Zoom Video Communications closer to the event to reinforce key information and logistics.

Volunteers were encouraged to share their personal Buffalo stories and experiences with out-of-town guests, reinforcing our reputation as the City of Good Neighbors. This coordinated effort strengthened the visitor experience and further positioned Buffalo as a premier host city for major sporting events.



A GOOGLE REVIEW OF THE VISIT BUFFALO INFORMATION CENTER

The Buffalo Visitor Center at Canalside received a five-star Google review, underscoring the success of this strategic investment.

The reviewer praised the bold signage, vibrant murals, and intentional design, while specifically recognizing the welcoming and knowledgeable staff. One comment noted that the center feels less like a brochure stop and more like a space built to celebrate the city, reflecting the original vision to create a true front door to Buffalo.

The feedback is especially meaningful as it came from a destination Marketing professional at another respected DMO, affirming that Buffalo’s visitor experience matches the city’s growing momentum.

VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR "THAT'S BUFFALO FOR YOU" BRAND



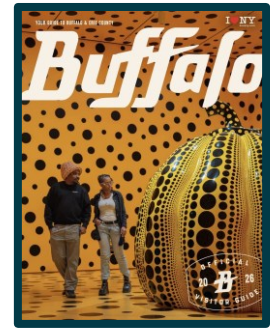
Within six months of launch, Visit Buffalo's That's Buffalo For You brand has already earned national recognition, underscoring the strength of the strategy and creative execution. The campaign received a Silver ADDY Award at the KC American Advertising Awards.



Developed in partnership with MMGY Global, the campaign resonated because it leaned into Buffalo's authentic, and often contradictory, identity rather than trying to explain it away. That honesty drove strong community buy-in, meaningful local and regional media coverage, and even national cultural attention, including a lighthearted mention on Late Night with Seth Meyers.

This early recognition reflects the effectiveness of the brand platform, the talent and leadership of Visit Buffalo's Marketing team, and the value of investing in a clear, confident destination narrative that both residents and visitors can embrace.

RELEASE OF THE 2026 VISITOR GUIDE



Visit Buffalo has released the 2026 Visitor Guide with a three-cover approach that reflects the breadth of the destination.

The covers feature outdoor recreation in Erie County Parks, the Kusama exhibition at the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, and iconic Buffalo food, including beef on weck, sponge candy, pizza, and Buffalo wings. This approach allows us to showcase the region's natural assets, nationally recognized arts and culture offerings, and distinctive culinary identity.

The interior content was developed with clear audience segmentation. Families are guided toward outdoor activities and attractions suited for all ages. Couples are presented with itineraries focused on arts, waterfront dining, and architecture. International visitors receive a curated introduction to Buffalo as an authentic American city experience.

While digital marketing remains a primary investment, demand for printed guides continues among leisure visitors, meeting attendees, and sports event participants. The physical guide remains a valued planning tool in hotels, visitor centers, and convention settings, reinforcing destination awareness and influencing on-site decision making.

The 2026 guide reflects a strategic and creative effort by the Visit Buffalo marketing team to position Buffalo's diverse experiences in a compelling and tangible format that supports visitation growth.

EAST AURORA NATIONAL RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITY

The Village of East Aurora has been named a finalist for *Parade's* America's Favorite Small Towns, presenting a timely opportunity for national visibility within Erie County.

East Aurora's walkable Main Street, strong independent retail mix, Roycroft legacy, and authentic small-town character align closely with the visitor experiences Visit Buffalo promotes across the region. A strong showing in the public vote would further elevate East Aurora as a compelling leisure destination and reinforce Erie County's broader tourism narrative. The winning community receives national recognition, official "Favorite Small Town in America" signage, and a *Parade* celebration tied to its July Fourth festivities.



VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

WINTER PRESIDENT'S WEEK GUIDE TO BUFFALO

During February break, Visit Buffalo promoted a Winter President's Week Guide designed to encourage leisure travel and local exploration during one of the season's most underutilized periods. The campaign positioned winter as an asset and highlighted Buffalo as an active, inviting destination even during colder temperatures.

The guide focused on helping visitors and residents make the most of winter by balancing outdoor activities with warm, indoor experiences. Content emphasized snow-forward recreation, seasonal events, and family-friendly activities, paired with cozy dining, cultural attractions, and neighborhood experiences. This approach aligned with Visit Buffalo's broader year-round messaging strategy, which encourages travelers to embrace Buffalo's climate rather than avoid it.

Distributed primarily through digital and social channels, the guide drove traffic to Visit Buffalo's winter content hub and reinforced planning tools that help visitors build itineraries with confidence. The campaign supported hotel and attraction partners during a traditionally slower travel period and complemented ongoing winter advertising under the "That's Buffalo For You" brand.

Overall, the Winter President's Week Guide helped shift perception, extend engagement beyond peak seasons, and reinforce winter as a compelling and authentic time to experience Buffalo and Erie County.



KATE SCADUTO REPRESENTS VISIT BUFFALO IN THE COMMUNITY



Kate Scaduto, Marketing & Social Media Manager at Visit Buffalo, represented the organization as a featured speaker at TechBuffalo's Women in Tech Western New York event on March 26, 2026. Recognized as a local influencer and leader in social media content creation, Kate continues to elevate Buffalo's digital presence through innovative and engaging storytelling.

Now in its fifth year, the event serves as an important platform connecting women across the region's growing tech and innovation sectors. Kate delivered a session titled *Creating Content Even the Algorithm Will Love*, sharing practical strategies on content creation, including messaging, timing, and audience engagement.

Her participation underscores Visit Buffalo's commitment to supporting workforce development, strengthening regional storytelling capabilities, and positioning Buffalo as a hub for innovation and talent.

Kate has also been selected to participate in Leadership Buffalo's Rising Leaders Class of 2026, further demonstrating her growing impact as an emerging leader in the community.

VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT


MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

MEDIA COVERAGE – JANUARY 2026

- Conde Nast Traveler
- AFAR
- Islands
- World Atlas
- Travel & Tour World
- Yachting World
- Southern Living
- Delish
- The Takeout
- Islands
- WorldAtlas
- Forbes
- AAA Network
- Food & Wine
- Parade

Total Readership:
174,544,215

MEDIA COVERAGE EXAMPLES



Condé Nast Traveller

15 Best Restaurants in Buffalo for Wings, Pizza, and Fine Dining

Buffalo, New York, and its food scene have been linked to the chicken wing ever since a bartender at *Anchor Bar* asked his mother to make a late-night snack for him and his friends in 1964—or so the legend goes. The deep-fried chicken scraps quickly became a menu staple as an inexpensive snack that simultaneously boosted beer sales, and the rest is history. But in the six decades since that fateful night, the Queen City's culinary landscape has undergone multiple evolutions, driven largely by a vast diversity of immigrants who have shaped the city.

There are the German, Polish, Italian, and Irish restaurants and bars, the legacies of European immigrants who helped establish the city as a dominant shipping port and

Max Kalnitz
Max Kalnitz is an award-winning multimedia journalist who grew up in Buffalo, New York.

Readership:
2,866,554



TTW TRAVEL AND TOUR WORLD


Buffalo to Become America's Ultimate Great Lakes Gateway—Cruise Ships Set to Boost Tourism Like Never Before!

Published on January 24, 2026

Buffalo, New York, is set to become a prominent port of call for **Great Lakes** cruise ships this summer, thanks to a new partnership with **American Cruise Lines**. Starting in May 2026, the cruise line will launch a new 14-day route from Buffalo to Milwaukee, making monthly stops throughout the summer months. This exciting new venture is expected to significantly boost the local tourism industry offering visitors the chance to explore **Western New York** in a whole new way.

A New Chapter for Buffalo's Tourism Industry
This summer, Buffalo will experience a significant transformation in its tourism

Readership:
11,289,489



Forbes

The Snowiest Places In The World For Winter Fun, Skiing And Travel

By Leah O'Rourke, Senior Contributor | © Leah O'Rourke is a bestselling author. | [View Article](#)

Surprisingly, three of the world's top ten snowiest cities—and the only U.S. cities on the list—are all in New York state: Buffalo, Syracuse and Rochester. Of these Buffalo has the most touristic appeals, with its downtown Canalside, a hotbed for skating, curling, ice biking and hockey surrounded by bars and restaurants, along with many other attractions and one huge one, nearby Niagara Falls. Then there is the city's famous signature dish, Buffalo chicken wings. Most people do not realize just how spicy Buffalo wings here can be if you order aggressively, and when it is cold outside, a wing crawl can keep you warm on the inside.

Readership:
58,739,060



Parade

AMERICA'S SMALLEST TOWN

Readership:
27,180,877

MEDIA COVERAGE – FEBRUARY 2026

- Travel + Leisure
- New York Upstate
- All about Jazz
- WABC-AM (NYC)
- AFAR (2 articles)
- Family Destinations Guide
- Black Enterprise

Total Readership:
16,623,979

MEDIA COVERAGE EXAMPLES



AFAR

The Heart of Buffalo's Black History Beats in This Cultural Corridor

From a legendary jazz club to an Underground Railroad church, George Scott, president of the Colored Musicians Club and Jazz Museum, shares how Buffalo's Black heritage is being preserved, restored, and reintroduced to the public.



George Scott, president of the Board of Directors for the Colored Musicians Club and Jazz Museum in Buffalo, New York, was only an adolescent in the late 1970s when he started breaking up on his saxophone skills among professors of musicians. Thanks to the recommendation of a friend, he attended a workshop at the club and soon began practicing with the bands of Black musicians who toured the country.

Readership:
633,170



FAMILY DESTINATIONS GUIDE

8 Hole-In-The-Wall Restaurants In New York With Outrageously Delicious Food

By Janik Gendry


2. Smokin' Little Diner (Depew)



Classic American photos in this vintage diner is polished exterior - Bar stepping into a Norman Rockwell painting where the pastures are actually better. Photo credit: Michael Olesar

This classic silver diner looks like it was plucked straight from the 1950s and dropped into modern-day Depew.

Readership:
1,576,542



BLACK ENTERPRISE

BEYOND MAJOR METROS: DISCOVER THE BLACK HISTORY AND ECONOMIC POWER OF PROVIDENCE, LANCASTER, AND BUFFALO

By Darin Pressley | February 21, 2026

Black History Month often centers on America's largest cities. But smaller and mid-size cities have plenty to offer.

Black History Month often centers on America's largest cities. But some of the most powerful, under-sold stories of African American resilience, innovation, and institution-building unfold in smaller Northeastern destinations.

Readership:
1,082,447



AllAboutJazz

Brandon Woody And UPENDO At The Buffalo AKG Museum's Art Of Jazz Series



By Frank Houah | February 4, 2026 | [View read count](#)

“The lightning-fast, angular melodies were accompanied by Troy Long's chiming piano. Michael Saunders and Kweku Sumbry exchanged mischievous grins as they steadily increased the tempo before a thunderous finale.”

Readership:
153,715

VISIT Buffalo FIRST QUARTER REPORT

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

MEDIA COVERAGE – MARCH 2026

The Travel Preservation Magazine
 New York State Fast Food Club
 Global Traveler Wallpaper
 Travel + Leisure (2 articles)
 Eater Preve
 Smithsonian Magazine
 Good Housekeeping
 National Geographic
 Highsnobiety

MEDIA COVERAGE EXAMPLES

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

12 Interesting Facts About Classic American Dishes

From apple pie to hamburgers, check out these surprising facts about America's iconic dishes.
 BY PAHETTE WILLIAMS PUBLISHED: MAR 23, 2026



2 Buffalo wings

Buffalo wings were born from scraps. In 1964, the Anchor Bar in Buffalo, NY, began deep-frying chicken wings in hot sauce as a late-night snack for the owner's son. Today, buffalo wings are served all over the country and are a staple at bars and game day watch parties.



Smithsonian Magazine Frank Lloyd Wright's Vision for the Martin House Included Everything Inside It. See How Experts Recovered Furniture, Artworks and Decorative Glass



The dining room of Martin House (William Dugan)

When Frank Lloyd Wright designed the Martin House in Buffalo, he didn't only envision its open layout, wooden beams and skylights. The architect also designed the home's interior, finding and creating furniture, artworks and decorative glass. Wright described his Prairie style creation as a "domestic symphony."

PEOPLE SAVING PLACES preservation WINTER 2026

From Our Readers: Sending Love to Historic Places

At the National Trust for Historic Preservation, we recognize how our work is driven by our supporters' passion for history and old places across the country. In February, we asked readers of our weekly newsletter to share their historic building love stories. The stories were both short and sweet, and in some cases incredibly specific—top lighting both the fence to landmarks connected to personal history. Here are clips of the responses that came our way.

"The goal to create a community-wide cooperation as well as restoring the Buffalo Central Terminal, has been inspiring." (Buffalo, New York) – Jacque O.

EATER

The 18 Best Restaurants in Buffalo

The best bites in Buffalo, which go well beyond wings, include seasonal small bites, fried seafood, and classic meaty sandwiches

Mangia Ristorante & Caffè
 Open for: Diner
 Price range: \$\$\$

Buffalo has no shortage of impressive Italian spots, but Mangia is a frontrunner. The menu highlights items like meaty lobster crabcakes filled with plump, sautéed chunks of fresh meat, stuffed hot banana peppers with Italian cheeses, and juicy meatballs. Try the vegetable lasagna, which swaps pasta for thin layers of sun-dried tomatoes, zucchini, spinach, eggplant, and mushrooms, all loaded with a cheesy mix and topped with one of several signature sauces (go with the tomato cream).

Know before you go: The portions are massive, so you'll likely have leftovers.
 4054 N Buffalo Rd, Orchard Park, NY 14227 US 17
 (716) 662-0407
 Visit website



Total Readership:
 64,304,822

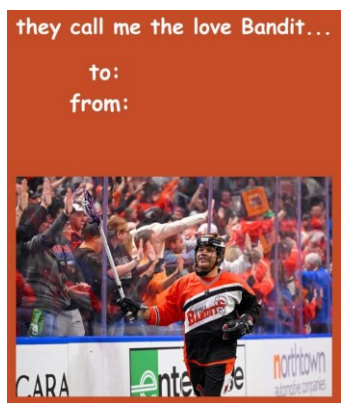
Readership:
 17,366,446

Readership:
 4,349,054

Readership:
 130,975

Readership:
 5,114,548

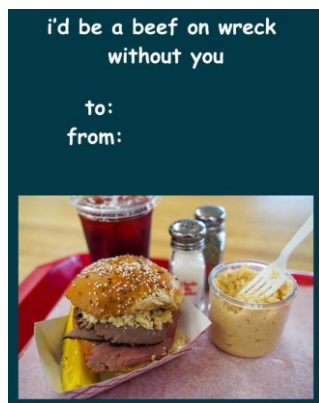
VALENTINE'S DAY SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVATION



The Visit Buffalo marketing team delivered a playful Valentine's Day activation that showcased the brand's personality and sense of humor, while reinforcing Buffalo's core visitor experiences.

The creative leaned into locally inspired "love notes" centered on what people genuinely love about Buffalo, including wings, architecture, beef on weck, arts and culture, championship sports moments, and outdoor recreation. The content performed well on social channels and generated strong engagement by tapping into shared local pride and recognizable touchstones.

The activation demonstrated how the That's Buffalo For You brand continues to flex creatively, balancing humor with authenticity and keeping the destination relatable, current, and distinctly Buffalo.



ATTENDING DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS SUMMIT

Visit Buffalo was represented at the Destinations International Marketing and Communications Summit in Cleveland by Karen Fashana, Brian Hayden, and Kate Scaduto, CTA.

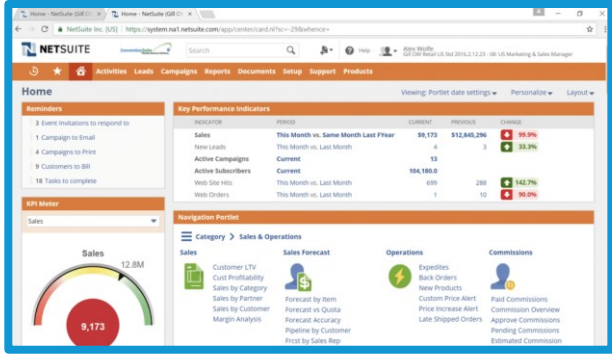
The summit focuses on destination branding, digital marketing, content strategy, paid media, public relations, and resident sentiment, with an emphasis on adapting to changing traveler behavior and increasing year-round demand. Participation allows Visit Buffalo to benchmark its work against peer destinations, strengthen industry relationships, and identify emerging best practices.

Insights from the conference will inform ongoing marketing and communications strategies, ensuring Buffalo and Erie County remain competitive and visible in the national tourism landscape.



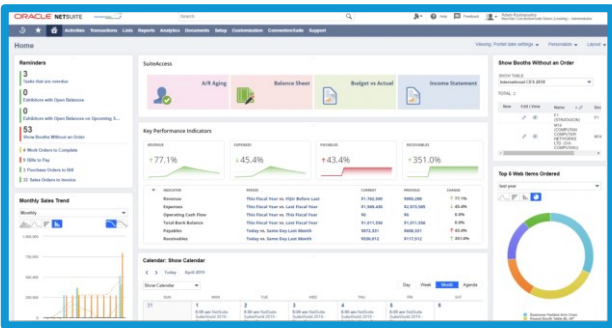
2026 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DASHBOARDS

SALES & SERVICES – MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS, SPORTS, AND TOUR & TRAVEL



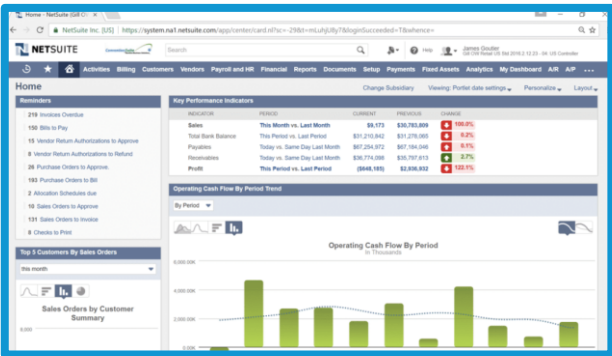
During the first quarter, the Buffalo Convention Center began its transition to ConventionSuite, powered by Oracle NetSuite, marking an important shift toward a fully integrated operating platform. This period has focused heavily on staff training, system configuration, and the careful migration from legacy processes to a more unified approach.

This transition is about more than new software. It is about changing how the building operates day-to-day. In the past, sales, event services, food and beverage, operations, and accounting often worked in parallel systems. That approach got the job done, but it required extra steps, created opportunities for error, and limited real-time visibility across departments.



ConventionSuite brings all those functions together into a single system. As teams move through training and begin using the platform, we are already seeing the benefits of having sales activity flow directly into event execution, food and beverage planning tied closely to bookings, and financial reporting connected in real time to every event in the building. Information is no longer passed along in pieces. It moves together, which strengthens coordination and improves accuracy.

Q1 has been a learning curve, as expected. Implementing a system of this scale requires discipline, patience, and a willingness to adapt long-standing processes. Staff across all departments have leaned in, and that effort is beginning to pay off as workflows become more consistent and communication improves.



We anticipate continued progress through Q2, with the goal of reaching full operational integration by Q3. At that point, the Convention Center will be operating from a single source of truth across all major functions. That means faster decision-making, stronger financial oversight, and a more seamless experience for clients from the first sales conversation through final contract.

In plain terms, we are moving from a collection of systems to one coordinated operation. It is the kind of behind-the-scenes change that may not be visible to every guest walking through the doors, but it will absolutely be felt in the quality, consistency, and professionalism of what we deliver.

EXAMPLES OF BCC BUSINESS HELD IN THE FIRST QUARTER



New York Bar Exam



February 28, 2026



WNY Stormwater Coalition

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Matthew Chiazza, The Reikart House – Treasurer
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Paris Roselli, Richardson Olmsted/Lipse Architecture Center
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Kate Scaduto, Marketing & Social Media Manager
Renata Toney, Vice President of Destination Experience
Marisa Urbano, National Sales Manager
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Meaghan Zimmer, Senior Sales Director



PURPOSE STATEMENT:

We champion America’s greatest reimagined city.



PURPOSE STATEMENT:

We inspire connection through unparalleled hospitality, collaborative partnerships, and exceptional experiences.

BUFFALO CONVENTION CENTER STAFF

Tony Barnwell, Operations Manager
Melissa Burke, Senior Director of Sales
Jeff Calkins, Vice President & General Manager
Lorna Cullen, Office Manager
Kevin Diver, Events Services Manager
Jamie Flood, Controller
Patrick Kaler, President & CEO
Jolani Knoll, Sales & Catering Manager
Michael Hamilakis, HR Benefit Coordinator
Craig Landseadel, Executive Chef
MaryAnn Martin, Bookkeeper & Benefits Manager
Heater Petrino, Sales & Services Coordinator
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Ken Sanford, Chief Engineer
Colleen Scozzafava, Director of Sales
Marlon Shallowhorn, Sous-Chef
Bud Redding, Director of Operations
Corey Watson, Food & Beverage Manager
Danielle Winarski, Assistant General Manager
Mark Wittman, Director of Business Operations
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